

BEAR FACTS

Planning Trends and Information for California State Parks

October 2002

What Leaders Think

The Planning Division of California State Parks surveyed California state legislators, mayors, county executives and the chairs of county boards of supervisors in early 2002 to assess their opinions about parks and recreation. The survey results have been published in ***California Leaders' Opinions of Parks and Recreation***.

Survey responses show that 60% of the responses to the survey of state legislators came from the six most highly urbanized counties of Southern California. Up to 20 million of California's 34 million residents live in cities represented in the mayors' survey results. In contrast, 89% of the responses from chairs of county boards of supervisors came from Central and Northern California counties, while responses from county executives provided broad representation from throughout the state.

Highlights from Each Leader Group

- √ While state legislators felt residents placed a low value on the concept that parks create jobs and generate income for local businesses, in their own opinions, they strongly agreed that recreation areas increase the value of nearby residential property and commercial property. This comparison indicates that presenting the case for parks' positive effect on the economy would be more effective in terms of property values rather than jobs and business. Furthermore, legislators felt that stabilizing and improving the economy would be a top priority over the next five years. (continued on page 2)

BEAR FACTS – October 2002

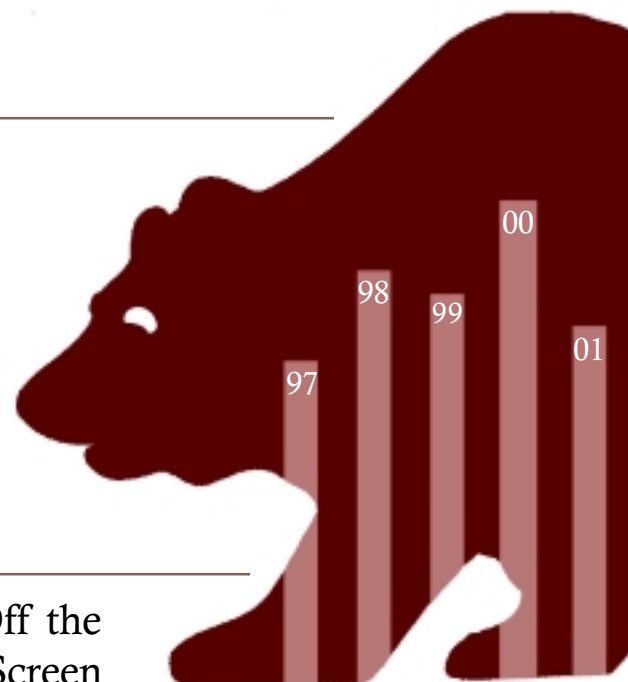
Parks Off the Radar Screen

In June, 2002, the Public Policy Institute of California ran a statewide survey assessing the attitudes and opinions of Californians on a wide variety of environmental issues. Asked what they thought was the state's single most important environmental issue, respondents ranked "lack of parks and recreation" twelfth, just above the collective "other" and "don't know." Oh, yes, "protecting wildlife", an issue that can loosely be related to larger and more rural parks and recreation areas, ranked ninth.

The environmental areas of greatest public concern were, in order, (1) air pollution, (2) growth, development and sprawl, (3) water, ocean and beach pollution, (4) water supply and (5) traffic congestion. These are the big, multi-faceted problems that effect everyone on a daily basis. They often hit the poor harder than the middle class or rich. They have ripple effects with negative aspects that are many and varied. No one can reasonably argue that these are not the most critical environmental issues. No one can hope that an increased effort by park professionals, personally or through a increased public relations budgets, might move "lack of parks and recreation" any higher as an issue of great public concern.

Probably the best we can do as park professionals is to take Emerson's advice and hitch our wagon to a star. What we can do is to make a major effort to associate parks and recreation with those environmental issues that are of greatest public concern. Don't parklands reduce air pollution,

(continued on page 2)



- ✓ Mayors were least satisfied with traffic, noise, clean air/water and similar environmental conditions. Depending on the park locations and facilities, there may be a case for using parks to mitigate some of these problems (e.g., bike trails for alternative transportation and cleaner air, watershed protection in natural areas).
- ✓ While county supervisors ranked residents' value for parks creating jobs and generating income for local businesses at the lowest level, the supervisors themselves ranked this value with the second to highest score.
- ✓ In framing budgetary requests for parks and recreation programs, an emphasis on quality of life and the positive effect that parks have on property values would reflect the county executives' opinions. This is especially true in light of the fact that improving the local economy ranks at the top of the list of important issues over the next five years.


Comparison of Responses

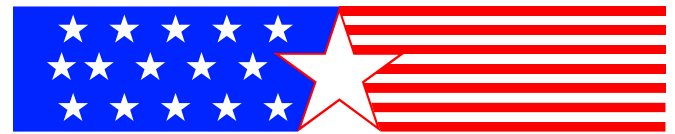
- ◆ All four leader groups agreed that residents most value parks and recreation programs because they provide safe, wholesome, fun programs and park facilities for family activities.
- ◆ Leaders strongly agreed that recreation areas and facilities improve the quality of life in their communities.
- ◆ All leader groups felt that there are not enough recreation areas and facilities available for convenient use. Perhaps surprisingly, of all the groups of leaders, county supervisors, with strong representation of Central and Northern California, were the least satisfied with the availability of recreation areas and facilities.

This survey is the first of its type to take into consideration factors of importance, satisfaction, perception of constituents, and opinion. With this information, park and recreation providers may be

better able to tailor the programs and services that they provide by building on areas that California leaders consider being of high value and strengthening areas that are currently perceived to be of lesser value.

Leader Group	# Surveyed	Responses
Mayors	476	222 (46.6%)
State Legislators	120	58 (48.3%)
County Supervisors	58	27 (46.6%)
County Executives	58	40 (68.9%)

To receive a copy of the California Leaders' Opinions document, email Laurie Taylor at ltayl@parks.ca.gov or call (916) 653-4458. 



(*Parks off the Radar Screen*, continued)

at least to some small degree? Surely parklands are an important component of "smart" urban growth, increasing property values, protecting streams and open areas and giving desirable form and providing amenities to new urban development. Water is perhaps the most critical across-the-board ingredient in outdoor recreation areas, and keeping these waters clean and flowing is a worthy park-related goal. And so on.

Proposition 40 passed handily in large part because it wasn't narrowly focused just on the funding of park and recreation lands and facilities. Instead, it reached out to embrace many of the broad environmental and quality-of-life issues. In doing this, it attracted many other constituencies, especially ethnic minorities, and thereby received their support and their votes. Park and recreation agencies can apply this sort of thoughtful inclusiveness in designing bond measures at the county and city levels. Inclusiveness can be incorporated in program design, in agency outreach and constituency building. We need to join with others in a common cause to keep parks and recreation a viable and flourishing public function, offering the benefits and services that it alone provides best.





2002 Trails and Greenways Conference

Over 200 trail enthusiasts attended the 19th California Trails and Greenways Conference held September 6-8 in Tahoe City. It was a very busy three days that began with Friday morning wind and rain followed by beautiful blue skies at the Trails Review session held at D.L. Bliss and Emerald Bay State Parks.

More than 15 different sessions were held, ranging from water trails and regional master trail planning to funding and CEQA/NEPA. Friday evening's keynote speaker, J.S. Holliday provided a lively and at times non-PC look at California's Gold Rush-era immigrants and how their attitudes about tossing out the "old ways" created much of what California is today.

Saturday afternoon sent conference goers on various mountain biking and hiking adventures in the Tahoe area. The evening's keynote speaker was Brian Robinson. Brian captured the imagination and respect of the attendees with his stories and slide show revisiting his adventures hiking the Pacific Crest, Appalachian and the Continental Divide trails—all 7,371 miles in just 300 days during 2001.

Sunday brought the conference to a close with a look at the efforts being undertaken on two of California's long distance trails, the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail and the California Coastal Trail.



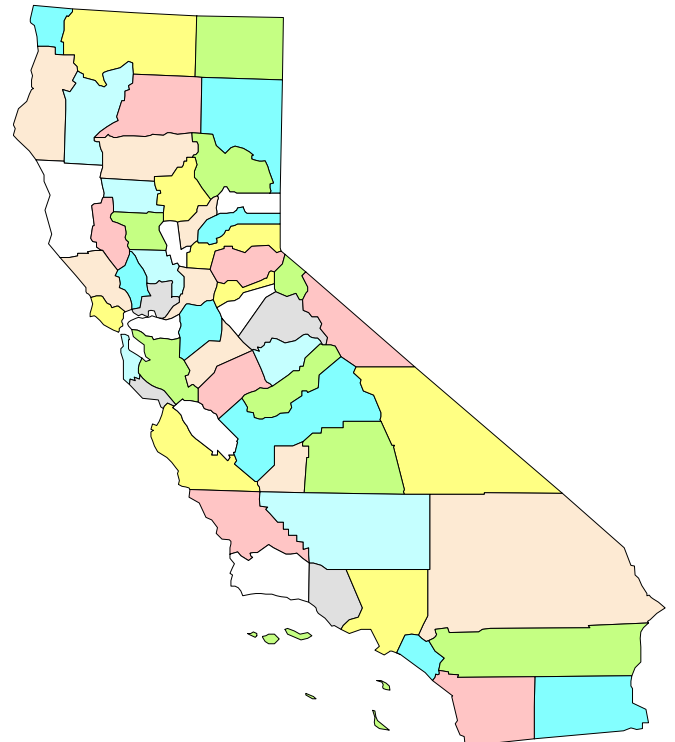
Which Parks and Why?

As a variation on the normal format of this feature, this column will ask for the reader's best guess as to the State Park System's "market share" of a variety of items. An answer that is within 10% of the true answer will be deemed close enough to be correct.

What is the State Park System's share of:

1. California's geographic area, its total acreage
2. The length of California's Pacific Ocean coastline
3. The number of California counties (that have at least one unit of the System)
4. The number of state and federally-listed rare and endangered plant and animal species found in California
5. The missions founded in Alta California by the Catholic church during the Spanish period
6. The sites in California which are on the federal list of National Natural Landmarks
7. The total acreage of officially designated State (not federal) Wilderness
8. State government's total number of designated peace officers

Answers on Page 8



A Child's Bill of Rights

With all the talk about rights these days, from civil rights to animal rights and patient's rights; why not focus on the rights of our most precious creation—our children—to our most treasured resources—our great outdoors? This was the question addressed by the California Roundtable on Recreation, Parks, and Tourism.

The idea of a child's Bill of Rights for California's outdoors was first conceived during informal discussions of Marlene Finley's staff at the U.S. Forest Service's California Regional Office. Marlene brought the idea to an Executive Council meeting of the Roundtable where it was greeted with great enthusiasm. In turn, the Executive Council presented the idea at a Roundtable General Members' meeting where it was similarly embraced.

The approach under consideration is of an Outdoors Bill of Rights for the Children of California. The Bill will start with a preamble, followed by a series of 10-12 "rights". For example, every child in California has the right to

- Splash in the surf
- Camp under the stars
- Discover the past
- Play in a safe place

And so on. The Bill of Rights will conclude with a challenge to service providers to make these rights a priority in their actions and to translate these rights into opportunities.

The Bill's task group is co-chaired by:

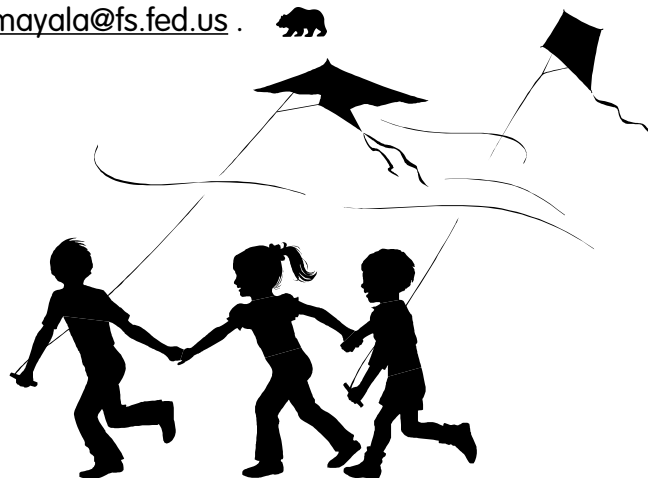
- Jim Angelo, Sonoma County Regional Parks; and
- Marlene Finley, U.S. Forest Service.

Group members are:

- Mary Cahill, Chico Area Rec. and Park District
- Eileen Hook, Division of Tourism
- Dorothy Benjamin, Dept. of Water Resources
- Bob Garrison, Nature Tourism Planning
- Paul Slavik, American Honda Motorcycle Division,
- Laura Westrup, California State Parks; and
- Ray Murray, National Park Service.

While a proclamation or legislative resolution is a natural fit for the Bill of Rights, the Roundtable is currently working on an implementation strategy that will provide even greater substance to the Bill. For example, the Bill could be incorporated into the criteria for subsequent competitive grant programs; or the Roundtable could raise funds for the award of scholarships and internships associated with carrying the message of the Bill forward. A number of similar ideas will be developed to encourage agencies, organizations, and individuals to "sign on." Once the implementation strategy is further along, the Roundtable will be working with a professional marketing firm to advance the idea.

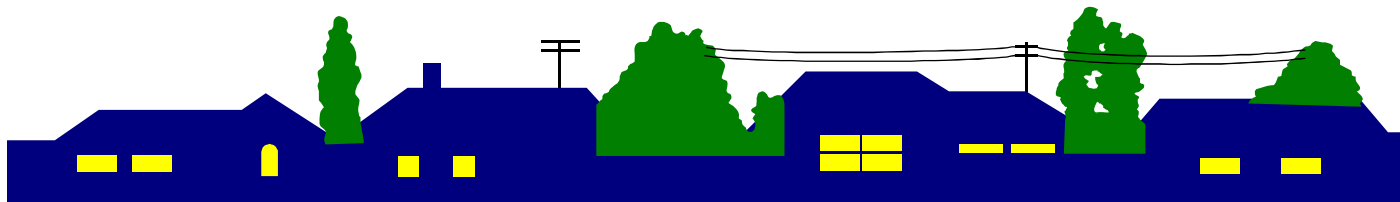
If you have thoughts on the Outdoors Bill of Rights for the Children of California, what it should say, or how it can be given more emphasis, please contact Martha Ayala at (916) 930-3996 or mayala@fs.fed.us.



Statistics from "Safe Routes to Schools"

- In California, as many as 5,000 child pedestrians are injured each year.
- 78% of children fall short of the recommended 30 minutes per day of exercise.
- Pedestrian accidents are the second leading cause of fatal injuries among 5-12 year-olds statewide; bicycle crashes are fifth.
- 35% of children watch five hours or more of television per day.
- 22% of American children are now considered obese, a 55% increase from 1963.

www.transact.org/ca/saferoute/saferoute.htm



The Rich Got Richer and the Poor Got Poorer

In 1996, voters in the City of Los Angeles approved Proposition K, providing money for the purpose of increasing and enhancing public park and recreation lands. One would think that this money would be spent throughout the city in some way where everyone would gain about the same level of new benefit. Some might hope that the spending would be skewed so that the more poorly-served areas would get more than those that were already better served.


Neither result was accomplished with Proposition K, according to a recent study conducted by the Sustainable Cities Program of the University of Southern California. Instead, areas of the city which had higher income residents and were already better served in terms of parks and open space got a disproportionately higher share of the Proposition K funds. Areas with high concentrations of ethnic minorities, with high concentrations of children and youth, and with higher poverty rates did not do so well in the competition for the money. The study showed that, after this money was spent, the level of access to park resources improved far more for people in well-to-do areas than it did for those living in the poorer areas.

This perhaps-unexpected result was not necessarily the consequence of political manipulation or of some backroom battle between the rich and the poor. To the contrary, it was in large part due simply to the design of the program by which the funding was allocated. Most of the Proposition K money was spent for improvements to existing parks. And

since, at the outset, the affluent areas had far more existing parks than did the poor areas, they got a disproportionately larger share of the Proposition K funds.

If the designers of funding allocation programs want a different outcome, they need to frame a different allocation strategy. If the City of Los Angeles, or any other jurisdiction, wants to increase the availability of park and recreation lands and facilities to people who are currently underserved, a substantial share of the money may have to be allocated for land acquisition. The primary need is to increase the number and size of parks in the underserved area. This is particularly true if one of the program's goals is to have park facilities widely spread, located close to where children live.

Even in very poor areas, new land is expensive, and its acquisition may rely on using vacant lots, alleys, underutilized school sites, other public or utility-owned property – maybe even buying derelict properties and renovating them for use as new or expanded parks. Unless the land base for parks in underserved areas is increased, a spending program that is focused on facility developments and the renovation of existing buildings and grounds can hardly help but increase the current inequities in the number and quality of park and recreation opportunities available to every citizen.

Citation: Parks and Park Funding in Los Angeles: an Equity Mapping Analysis, Sustainable Cities Program, GIS Research Laboratory, University of Southern California. Contact Denise Steiner at dsteiner@usc.edu. 

Prop. 50—Paying Off the Developers?

Proposition 50, if it passes on this November's ballot, will provide hundreds of millions of dollars for the state to buy land for wetland and watershed restoration, and to expand drinking water supplies. Some \$750 million will be available just for the purchase of coastal properties for environmental purposes—which can surely include park and recreation purposes. This measure is strongly supported by environmental groups that are eager to save valuable lands from unwanted development, thereby preserving forever their natural and recreational values for public benefit.

Proposition 50 may be supported even more strongly through the campaign donations of landowners and speculators who have lands they very much want to sell. Chief among these parties are corporations which have repeatedly failed to get approvals for their proposed developments. Many such efforts have been rejected or revised by regulatory and permitting agencies; others have been stymied by environmentalists' lawsuits. After years of project redesign, legal battles, bad publicity and subsequent failure, the corporate strategy in many cases is now to just get rid of the property, take the money, and try to develop somewhere else where the opposition will be less intense. Proposition 50 may be the source of such money.

As a variation on this situation, there are a few speculators who have bought environmentally valuable property and simply threaten to develop it. These individuals do so with the expectation that public agencies and private organizations will react by buying them out, at a considerable profit to themselves. Representative Sam Farr has labeled one of these speculators as engaging in "environmental terrorism." Valuable land is being held hostage, so to speak.

All this puts conservationists and park supporters in a bit of a dilemma. Part of the larger price of saving these environmentally valuable lands may be to provide developers and (worse yet) speculators an exceedingly good return on their investment, and do so at considerable public expense.

This thought rankles many people. The major consolation to this feeling is the knowledge that the purchase of these lands will not just save them, but it will also spare these conservation groups the time and costly effort needed to continue to oppose and thwart unwanted development.

Saving these lands raises another issue. As these lands come into public ownership, the managing agencies will have to find additional funding and staff to protect and manage them, doing so precisely at a time when state and local government budgets will be reeling from shortfalls and cutbacks. The consolation here may be that even a level of benign neglect of these new landholdings, safely in public ownership may, in the short run, be a great deal better than any other alternative.



State Park System adds Seven Park Properties

Each year, the Planning Division provides an official total of State Park units. As of July 1, 2002 the total is 273. The following additions were made in Fiscal Year 01/02:

- ◆ Point Cabrillo Light Station (Mendocino Co.)
- ◆ John B. Dewitt State Reserve (Humboldt Co.)
- ◆ Mill Creek Project (Del Norte Co.)
- ◆ Hatton Canyon Project (Monterey Co.)
- ◆ Castro Adobe Project (Santa Cruz Co.)
- ◆ Cornfields Project (Los Angeles Co.)
- ◆ Taylor Yard Project (Los Angeles Co.)

Acquiring Minds Want to Know


The State Park System preserves lands of state-wide significance for the health, inspiration and education of today's visitors and future generations. In keeping with its mission state park leaders have recently codified acquisition categories based on the Department's "Visioning" process. These categories amount to a new strategy for prioritizing land acquisition.

In mid-September a Department Notice was distributed describing the revised Acquisition Planning Process, including eight acquisition categories. This process identifies the criteria for evaluating all proposed additions to the State Park System, whether purchase or gift. Proposed projects will be ranked according to the criteria summarized under each category. The Planning Policy and Programming Committee uses this information to develop the Multi-year Capital Outlay Program. The eight acquisition categories are:

- Urban Strategy Acquisitions: The Department will seek proposals that provide opportunities in and near heavily populated urban areas that are also the most under-served by local and regional park and recreation lands and facilities.
- Unique Natural Resource Areas: To preserve representative samples of California's natural areas, unprotected environmentally sensitive habitat types, geologic features, and important paleontological sites must be identified. The Department will focus in part on under-protected, under-represented, and rarely found resources in the State Park System or other protected lands in California.
- Sustainable Ecosystems: The Department will be seeking properties that:
 - contribute to landscape and habitat linkages
 - contribute to long-term protection of significant watersheds
 - are in three significant ecological regions (Sacramento Valley, San Joaquin Valley, and the Delta area)
 - support large areas of underprotected

- major habitat types
- provide buffers to existing unit wildlands

- Expanded Recreation Opportunities: More lands are needed to accommodate both traditional and new kinds of recreation opportunities that serve the needs of a growing population and nontraditional state park users, and accommodate the recreation needs of underserved urban residents.
- Cultural Landscapes and Corridors: Cultural acquisition candidates are those corridors that encompass multifaceted resources that reflect complex connections between different peoples and different time periods and resources.
- Significant Cultural Resources: The cultural resource properties that need to be acquired by the Department are those that contribute to the understanding of significant and under-represented prehistoric, ethnographic, and historic cultural sequences in California.
- Trail Connections and Corridors: Potential trail acquisitions would ideally be in urban proximity, accommodate multi-use interests and abilities with minimal conflicts, have a high degree of connectivity, and include support facilities such as staging areas and parking.
- In-Holdings and Adjacent Properties: The Department seeks to acquire properties that are located within or adjacent to park units. Typically these properties are small in size, must be at least 50 percent surrounded by an existing state park, and must have at least one contiguous boundary with a state park.

Each time acquisition funding becomes available—as it has with the passage of the 2000 and 2002 Park Bond Acts—ideas for property acquisition are gathered and evaluated. Field Superintendents and non-profits submit the bulk of the suggestions. Having acquisition categories and criteria in place discourages unwanted suggestions and pressure to acquire inappropriate lands that will not serve the best interests of the people of California. 

Bear Facts

is published in June, October,
and February of each year by
the Planning Division of
California State Parks

Division Chief -
Keith Demetrak

Editor - Linda McDonald
lmcd@parks.ca.gov

Cover Design - Philip Carey

For address changes or addi-
tional subscriptions contact
Laurie Taylor at
(916) 653-9901,
FAX (916) 651-8456



Printed on recycled paper

Answers to the “Which Parks and Why” from page 3:

1. 1.39%—the State Park System owns or leases 1.45 million of the state’s 104.77 million acres of land and water surface.
2. 25.87%—the System has 284.64 miles of the state Coastal Commission’s official figure of 1,100 miles of coastline.
3. 86.21%—the System has at least one unit in 50 of the state’s 58 counties.
4. 27.30%—the System has 156 of the 571 listed species found in California.
5. 4.55%—the System has only one such mission, at La Purisima Mission SHP. The “mission” at Santa Cruz Mission SHP is only a replica built at 1/3 of the original size, the actual mission building at San Juan Bautista SHP is still owned by the Catholic church, and the mission at Sonoma SHP was built during the Mexican, not the Spanish, period.
6. 32.47%—the System has 11 of the 34 National Natural Landmark sites which are located in California.
7. 99.61%—the System has 10 State Wilderness areas; the rest of the state’s wilderness consists of six small areas of state school lands, administered by the State Lands Commission.
8. 6.38%—the System has 698 of state government’s 10,941 peace officers.

California State Parks
Planning Division
P.O. Box 942896
Sacramento, CA 94296-0001

